

Morgan Stanley Smith Barney Supports Efforts To Stop Bullying

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Morgan Stanley Smith Barney Supports Holmdel Residents "Super" Efforts To Stop Bullying!

He is not your typical executive in a major investment firm: Holmdel resident Anthony Codispoti is more like Superman.

As a First Vice President at Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, Codispoti dons a suit and tie to meet with clients, lay out investment strategies, build portfolios, and offer a complete asset-management program. The "risks" are confined to assets — equities, corporate and emerging market bonds, and commodities.

After hours, Codispoti loosens his tie to deal with much more perilous situations – children at risk, either physically or emotionally, because of bullying.

In an effort to curtail what he calls rampant bullying throughout New Jersey, Codispoti has been instrumental in pioneering an anti-bullying program called the Stop Bullying Now Project, aimed at empowering, providing resources for and supporting children who are being bullied, and creating a culture where the epidemic of bullying will not be tolerated.

"We have three tips for dealing with bullies," Codispoti says. "1) Document – bullying is not okay. Write down and record the incident. Note the date, time, location and people involved. 2) Report – go to parents, teachers or other adults in charge and tell them what is happening. 3) Ask

for help – you may not have the tools or authority to put a stop to bullying, but someone you know does. Don't hesitate to ask for help.”

The transformation from Morgan Stanley Smith Barney financial advisor to community super hero becomes even more apparent when Codispoti sheds the suit altogether and instead dons a martial arts uniform. Codispoti is a 6th Degree Black Belt and owns The Phoenix Way Mixed Martial Arts studio, where he teaches bully-proofing skills to children.

“The Phoenix Way offers a 2.5-hour anti-bullying and anti-abduction course called FAST CATS – Child Assertiveness Training Series. The course helps kids cope with the everyday ‘hot zones’ such as the playground, where inappropriate and often violent behavior occurs,” Codispoti says. “Some topics we cover include how to handle name calling and teasing, protecting personal space and possessions, setting boundaries against inappropriate touching or attention, and assessing appropriate defense and how not to start a fight.”

The martial arts studio also instructs children in ‘abduction awareness,’ teaching them to detect and avoid abduction, as well as how to physically break away and escape the grasp of a would-be abductor.

To accomplish all his career goals as a financial advisor as well as his goals in martial arts and community involvement, Codispoti has devised an overall philosophy he calls his ‘ABCs.’

“A is Awareness; B is Boundary setting; C is Conflict resolution,” explains Codispoti. “I can illustrate this with my anti-bullying program. A: making children and parents Aware that bullying is a real issue out there. B: helping children set verbal and physical Boundaries of what is appropriate. C: teaching children to resolve the Conflict through either verbal deflection or by going into a holding pattern.

“The ABCs are equally applicable to the financial realm,” he continues. “A: guiding a client towards becoming Aware of where they are now, financially, and where they eventually want to be. B: setting a Boundary or a blueprint for how they can reach their ultimate goals. C: resolving the Conflict and effectively putting the plan into action. It works.”



Codispoti juggles his career and his anti-bullying programs by setting similar goals and focusing on achieving them. “In my work as a financial advisor I strive to enhance my clients’ lives by helping them manage their investments and their wealth in an optimal way so that they are empowered to achieve their life goals. I know that this will bring them, in the long run, enjoyment and a sense of financial independence,” he says. “When I help kids who are being bullied, I am also empowering them; first and foremost, I am helping to keep them safe, and I am offering them tools of conflict resolution and self-esteem building that they can use for a lifetime. I know that this too will bring them joy and security.”

His firm has always been supportive of the time and effort he puts into his anti-bullying program. “Morgan Stanley Smith Barney actively encourages all its employees to become involved in the local community and to pursue charitable endeavors. There is no question that we need to curtail the wave of bullying, in this community and beyond.”

In his office at 55 Broad Street in Red Bank, Codispoti says that he is particularly grateful for the company’s commitment to helping children.

“Last year Morgan Stanley Smith Barney celebrated its 75th anniversary. An essential part of its long history and heritage is advocating on behalf of children. We did that with our recent “Fill the Plate” program when we partnered with Feeding America. And certainly drawing awareness to the plight of bullied children – and helping them cope – is a good example of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney’s pledge to help kids,” Codispoti says.

A graduate of Mount St. Mary’s University with a degree in Business and Finance, Codispoti focuses on portfolio management, retirement, estate and philanthropic planning, and professional money manager selection. He lives in Holmdel with his wife, Michelle, and children Jordan (8 years) and Nicholas (4 years).

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